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*To be continued every* THURSDAY.

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*Hoc eſt Româ decedere? Quos ego homines effugi, cum in hos incidi?* CICERO *ad* ATTICUM.

I HAVE generally obſerved when a man is talking of his country-houſe, that the firſt queſtion uſually aſked him, is, "Are you in a good "neighbourhood?" From the frequency of this enquiry one would be apt to imagine that the principal happineſs of a country life was generally underſtood to reſult from the neighbourhood: yet whoever attends to the anſwer commonly made to this queſtion, will be of a contrary opinion. Aſk it of a lady, and you will be ſure to hear her exclaim, "Thank God! we have no neigh-"bours!" which may ſerve to convince you that you have paid your court very ill, in ſuppoſing that a woman of faſhion can endure the inſipid converſation of a country neighbourhood. The man of fortune conſiders e-

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very inferior neighbour as an intruder on his ſport, and quarrels with him for killing that game, with which his very ſervants are cloyed. If his neighbour be an equal, he is of conſequence more averſe to him, as being in perpetual conteſt with him as a rival. His ſenſe of a ſuperiour may be learnt from thoſe repeated advertiſements, which everybody muſt have obſerved in the public papers, recommending a houſe upon ſale for being ten miles diſtant from a lord. The humouriſt hides himſelf from his neighbour; the man of arrogance deſpiſes him; the modeſt man is afraid of him; and the penurious conſiders a length of uninhabited fen as the beſt ſecurity for his beef and ale.

If we trace this ſpirit to it's ſource, we ſhall find it, in general, to proceed partly from pride and envy, and partly from the high opinion that men are apt to entertain of their own little clans or ſocieties, which the living in large cities tends greatly to encreaſe, and which is always accompanied with a contempt for thoſe who happen to be ſtrangers to ſuch ſocieties, and conſequently, a general prejudice againſt the UNKNOWN. The truth of the matter is, that perſons UNKNOWN are, for that very reaſon, perſons that we have no deſire to KNOW.

A MAN of a ſociable diſpoſition, upon coming into an inn, enquires of the landlord what company he has in the houſe: the landlord tells him, "there is a fel-"low of a college, a lieutenant of a man of war, a "lawyer, a merchant, and the captain in quarters;" to which he never fails to add, "and I dare ſay, ſir, "that any of them will be very glad of your company;" knowing that men drink more together than when alone. "Have you nobody elſe?" ſays the gueſt ſullenly. "We have nobody elſe, ſir." "Then get me my "ſupper as faſt as you can, and I'll go to bed." The

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ſame behaviour is practiſed by each of theſe gentlemen in his turn; and for no other reaſon, than that none of the company happen to be either of his profeſſion or acquaintance.

But if we look with the leaſt degree of wonder at the manner in which the greateſt part of mankind behave to ſtrangers, it ſhould aſtoniſh us to ſee how they treat thoſe whom they are intimately acquainted with, and whom they rank under the ſacred titles of neighbours and friends. Yet ſuch is the malignity of human nature, that the ſmalleſt foible, the moſt venial inadvertency, or the ſlighteſt infirmity, ſhall generally occaſion contempt, hatred or ridicule in thoſe very perſons who ought to be the foremoſt to conceal or palliate ſuch failings. Death, accident, robbery and ruin, inſtead of exciting compaſſion, are only conſidered as the great ſources of amuſement to a neighbourhood. Does any diſgrace befal a family? The tongues and pens of all their acquaintance are inſtantly employed to diſperſe it through the kingdom. Nor is their alacrity in divulging the misfortunes of a neighbour at all more remarkable than their humanity in accounting for them. They are ſure to aſcribe every trivial evil to his folly, and every great one to his vices. But theſe are ſlight inſtances of malevolence; your true neighbour's ſpleen is never effectually rouſed but by proſperity. An unexpected ſucceſſion to a large fortune; the diſcovery of a mine upon your eſtate; a prize in the lottery; but moſt of all, a fortunate marriage, ſhall employ the malice and invention of a neighbourhood for years together.

Envy is ingenious, and will ſometimes find out the prettieſt conceits imaginable to ſerve her purpoſes: yet it is obſervable that ſhe delights chiefly in contradiction. If you excel in any of the elegant arts, ſhe pronounces

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at once that you have no taſte; if in wit, you are dull; if you live in apparent harmony with your wife and family, ſhe is ſure you are unhappy; if in affluence or ſplendor, ſhe knows that you are a beggar. It muſt indeed be confeſſed that envy does meet with great provocations; and there are people in the world who take extraordinary pains to appear much more happy, rich, virtuous and conſiderable than they really are: but on the other hand, were they to take equal care to avoid ſuch appearances, they would not be able abſolutely to eſcape her rancour.

I WAS entertained laſt ſummer by a friend in the country, who ſeemed to have formed very juſt ideas of a neighbourhood. This gentleman had a conſiderable eſtate left him, which he had little reaſon to expect; and having no particular paſſion to gratify, it was indifferent to him how he diſpoſed of this large addition to his income. He had no deſire of popularity, but had a very great diſlike to an ill name; which made him altogether as anxious to ſcreen himſelf from detraction, as others are to acquire applauſe. Some weeks paſſed away in that common dilemma into which an encreaſe of fortune throws every thinking man, who knows that by hoarding up he muſt become the averſion, and by ſquandering, the contempt of all his neighbours. But diſliking the appearance of parſimony more than extravagance, he propoſed laying out a conſiderable ſum all at once upon rebuilding his houſe: but that deſign was ſoon over-ruled by the conſideration that it would be ſaid he had deſtroyed a very convenient manſion, for the ſake of erecting a ſhowy outſide. He next determined to new-model his gardens, from an opinion that he ſhould oblige all ſorts of people by affording bread to the induſtrious, and pleaſant walks to the idle: but recollecting

lecting that in the natural beauties of his grounds he had great advantages over the old gardens of his neighbours, and from thence knowing that he muſt become the object of their ſpleen and abuſe, he laid aſide alſo that invidious deſign. In the ſame manner he was obliged to reject every propoſal of expence, that might in any way be conſidered as a monument of ſuperiority: therefore, to avoid the other cenſure of penuriouſneſs, he reſolved at laſt to procure the beſt cook that could be had for money. From that time he has taken no thought but to equip himſelf and his attendants in the plaineſt manner, keeping religiouſly to the ſole expence of a conſtant good table, and avoiding in that, as well as in every thing elſe, whatever has the leaſt appearance of oſtentation. Thus has he made himſelf inoffenſively remarkable, and, what was the great point of his life, eſcaped detraction; excepting only that a certain dignified widow, who had been originally houſekeeper to her late huſband, takes occaſion frequently to declare, ſhe does not care to dine with him, becauſe the diſhes are ſo ill ſerved-up, and ſo taſteleſs that ſhe can never make a dinner.

I KNOW not how to cloſe this ſubject more properly, than by ſketching out the characters of what are generally called GOOD and BAD NEIGHBOURS.

A GOOD NEIGHBOUR is one, who having no attention to the affairs of his own family, nor any allotment for his time, is ready to diſpoſe of it to any of his acquaintance who deſire him to hunt, ſhoot, dance, drink or play at cards with them: who thinks the civilities he receives in one houſe no reſtriction upon his tongue in another, where he makes himſelf welcome by expoſing the foibles or misfortunes of thoſe he laſt viſited, and lives in a conſtant round of betraying and leſſening one family to another.